

23 February 1961

L-3950

Mr. Peter V. Ritner  
The Macmillan Company  
60 Fifth Avenue  
New York 11, New York

Dear Mr. Ritner:

It is letter-answering time once again, the usual decent interval having elapsed. I am again impressed by the short countdown involved in Macmillan operations. However, I regret to say that, flattered and tempted as I was by your offer of an immediate contract in New York, I have been having second thoughts on the wisdom of committing myself even to an implied deadline at this stage of my work.

These doubts have been reinforced by the expectation in Clause 19 that the completed manuscript of the work ready for the printer might be ready by April 1, 1961. Any manuscript you got from me on April 1st of this year would be appropriate to the day. This is not a hint that it would make me happier to change the date of that deadline; I merely remark that it was one more warning signal to me of the perils of awakening any such expectations in you by signing a contract now.

I am sure that this decision must be annoying and frustrating to you, but on the other hand if you reflect on my habits of work as revealed in the timing of my correspondence, you will realize that it could only cause you heartache to feel responsible for the production of this book on schedule.

This does not reflect dissatisfaction with the contract or with Macmillan. On the contrary, I have been highly favorably impressed by every aspect of our negotiations and, of course, I am very pleased by the enthusiasm which you and Macmillan have shown for my work as indicated by the promptness of your offers and the generous size of the advance. I simply feel that it would be better for us (anyway, for me) to let the matter hang fire until I have come much closer to finishing the manuscript. I can't promise when that will be, although it will certainly be considerably after April 1st.



Mr. Peter V. Ritner

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I might add that my employers are not only willing but anxious to see me complete this work (they're tired of hearing me whine about it). Nevertheless, new crises and interruptions are inevitable (for instance, another trip to Washington in March!) as RAND struggles to keep pace with the New Frontier. ("Meditation" is not the theme in Washington this year.)

Yours,

Daniel Ellsberg  
Economics Department

DE/ss

bcc: B. Haydon  
J. Hogan  
V. Reynolds  
ref. inc. #4697